

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



REPRESENTATIVE JASON ROJAS
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
In favor of House Bill 5444
March 15th, 2022

Chairs Kushner and Porter, Ranking Members Sampson and Arora, Vice Chairs Cabrera and Sanchez, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **H.B. 5444, AN ACT CONCERNING UNION WORKERS**

By way of brief background, H.B. 5444 is inspired by the lack of action on the PRO-Act in Congress. The PRO-Act is meant to protect the right to organize and protects the basic right to join a union by empowering workers to exercise their right to organize, holding employers accountable for violating workers' rights and securing free, fair, and safe union elections. The PRO-Act would amend previous labor laws by expanding various labor protections related to employees' rights to organize and collectively bargain in the workplace. Despite lack of action on the federal level, Connecticut workers hopefully know that we will have their backs thanks to the work of this committee.

Connecticut's State Labor Relations Act (SLRA) is similar to the National Labor Relations Act and is almost as old. The purpose of H.B. 5444 is to update this law with several important protections to ensure a fair work environment: adding new unfair labor practices and establishing a timeline for negotiations if the workers elect to form a union. Current law requires employers and employees to negotiate with respect to wages, hours of employment and other conditions of employment. This will encourage negotiations to begin no later than thirty days after a union is designated unless both parties mutually agree to delay the commencement of such negotiations to a date certain or a delay is ordered by the board. Adding this timeline for representatives to start first negotiations will ensure that people are able to fairly negotiate their working conditions without facing an unjustified delay.

With the PRO-Act stalled in Washington, we will continue to do what we can on the state level to make sure workers have a voice on the job. I'm glad to see the Labor committee introduce legislation that updates our State Labor Relations Act to set clear timelines for labor-management negotiations.

I urge favorable consideration in moving this bill forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J-Rojas".

Jason Rojas